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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT OF INL/PC SCOT HARRIS; UNVIE FOR HOWARD SOLOMON

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SUBJECT: CENTRAL DUBLIN GROUP MEETING: JUNE 2005

REF: BRUSSELS 082F3

11. Summary. During its June 21 meeting, the members of the Central Dublin Group (DG) reviewed regional reports from South-East Asia (submitted by Australia), South-West Asia (U.K.), Central Asia (Italy), Balkans and Near East (Greece), and Eastern Europe (Germany). The Group adopted most of the draft guidelines for restructuring the Group which had been developed by an appointed working party this spring. However, there was disagreement on whether new EU accession states in the future (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey, etc.) should automatically be admitted to the Dublin Group as were the 10 new Member States last year. After protracted and difficult debate, the issue was postponed to the winter meeting in hopes that a compromise could be found.

Non-EU members (U.S., Japan, Canada, Australia and Norway) were asked to come to the winter meeting with a nominee for chair of the Central Dublin Group to replace outgoing Belgian chair Raymond Yans. Action requests follow in para. 6. End summary.

Regional Reports

12. The members reviewed regional reports from South-East Asia (submitted by Australia), South-West Asia (U.K.), Central Asia (Italy), Balkans and Near East (Greece), and Eastern Europe (Germany). In presenting the report on South-West Asia, the U.K. rep reported a 64 percent increase in poppy cultivation in 2004 and a 17 percent increase in opium production in Afghanistan, but noted that there are early signs the cultivation of poppy is slightly decreasing so far this year. The biggest obstacle to reducing cultivation remains the lack of viable alternative livelihoods. Afghanistan needs a significant increase in international donor contributions. There are indications that Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan are now working together on supply interdiction. The Paris Pact mechanism is a helpful coordination mechanism. Coordination will also be enhanced when the UN ADAM database begins operations later this year. The U.K. rep noted the significant counter-narcotics contributions being made by the U.S. in Afghanistan. The postponed Counter-narcotics Trust Fund meeting will be rescheduled this fall. The UNODC rep noted that there will be a Paris Pact Roundtable in Tehran the first week of September. And the German rep said there will be an international cooperation conference in Doha in November. In presenting the report on Central Europe, The German rep complimented the new U.S. GUAAM initiative (Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova). He said the German chair of the Mini Dublin Group in Kiev reported that activities to activate the Group there so far have failed, partly due to lack of interest and information among DG members and partly due to organizational problems. DG members needed to encourage their embassies in Kiev to be more active.

Reform of the Dublin Group

3. The Group adopted most of the draft guidelines for restructuring the Group which had been developed by an appointed working party this spring. Most significantly, the Group adopted criteria for admitting new members, including that "new members should be net donors of international drug assistance." These criteria will now be used in considering membership applications from countries such as Turkey and Russia. However, there was disagreement on whether new EU accession states in the future (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey) should automatically be admitted to the Dublin Group as were the 10 new Member States last year. Japan and Australia argued strongly against automaticity, while Luxembourg insisted that EU Member States be admitted as a block whether or not they meet the new membership criteria. After protracted and difficult debate, the issue was postponed to the winter meeting in hopes that a compromise could be found. The new guidelines specify that Belize is to be included in the Caribbean regional group. Belize will therefore no longer be part of the U.S. regional report on Mexico and Central America.

Next Chair of the Dublin Group

14. The Guidelines stipulate that the chair of the CDG should rotate between EU Members and Non-EU members. According, the Belgian chair asked the U.S., Japan, Canada, Australia and Norway to come to the winter meeting with a nominee for chair of the Central Dublin Group to replace outgoing Belgian chair Raymond Yans.

Thematic Debate Topic for the next meeting

15. Australia proposed that the topic for the thematic debate at the winter meeting should be "ATS and Metamphetamines, including Precursor Control," The Group adopted this proposal.

Action Requests

16. The U.S. regional report on Mexico and Central America will be due at the winter meeting. This will be held in either December or January. In the event it is December, the report should be ready for submission by mid-November. Note that the U.S. proposals for the regional and mini Dublin Group report formats were adopted. The U.S. reports should therefore follow this new format. The U.S. should also be prepared to send an expert, if requested, on the thematic debate topic at the winter meeting. Guidance is requested as to whether the U.S. should join Japan and Australia in rejecting the automatic admission of any future EU Member States into the Dublin Group. Finally, guidance is also requested regarding the issue of the next chair of the Dublin Group.

McKinley

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